

Progress Report (Time Period: November 1, 2004 – November 29, 2004)

The study of “Socioeconomic Impact of Gambling on Iowans” aims to fulfill the following main objectives: economic impact of gambling at existing Iowa casinos on the local community; socioeconomic characteristics of gamblers; social impact of gambling on the local community; and impact of problem gambling. This progress report provides information on tasks accomplished as of November 29, 2004. The main focus at the current time has been on data collection.

The data collection phase for this time period was broadly divided into five categories. The first category focused on the census data on family finances, family relations, family health, demographics, employment assessment, school, crime, impact of pathological gamblers, general retail sales, and commercial tax revenue for study area I (all Iowa counties). The second category focused on the economic impact generated by casino visitors for study area IV (based upon casino employee zip codes). The third category examined the gaming revenue beneficiary data and the fourth category focused on identifying substitute sites in Study Areas II (within a 50 mile radius from the existing casinos) and III (casino counties). Finally, category five initiated survey of Iowan residents to assess the social impact of existing casinos on study Area II. The report ascertains progress for the current period (November 1, 2004 to November 29, 2004).

Census data

The research team (two graduate students from the College of Health, Physical Education, and Leisure Services) was recruited. In addition, two students from the Department of geography were hired to transform data into maps. The census data team is in the process of retrieving census data on family finances, family relations, family health, employment assessment, and demographics for Study Area I. The following data for Iowan demographics has been downloaded: age (median), married couples (percentage), family and household size (average), and annual household income (median). School data on drop out rates (K7-12) and total taxable retail sales data has also been downloaded. Please note that where ever possible median data is being provided to reduce the influence of outliers (unusual cases). The data will be displayed by maps. Tables have been created to display data for time series analysis (1988 to the most recent year) for Study Area III.

With regard to crime, data is being retrieved for overall crime rate, domestic abuse, total arrests, and gambling offenses. Data for Study Area III for the years 1998-2003 has been obtained from Iowa Department of Public Safety. Martha Coco, Statistical Research Analyst from the Iowa Department of Public Safety, has provided files for years

1989-1997. Some of the crime data is not readily available and has to be obtained through Martha Coco for an additional price. The team is in the process of converting this data into tables. The most recent year for Study Area I will be transformed into maps. Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP's) across the State of Iowa have been identified and will be contacted soon to obtain data on total number of emergency calls and their breakdown for Study Area I. Longitudinal data will be collected for Study Area III.

Beneficiary data

Beneficiaries are being grouped into appropriate categories such as county schools, social service agencies and volunteer fire departments. These will be randomly selected and contacted via telephone or email to obtain a breakdown of allocated revenue benefits.

Economic impact

Iowa Gaming Association has stated that the existing casinos only have data on club players. These do not represent the whole casino visitor market because they constitute 60% of the total visitors. It was decided to survey casino visitors over the months of December, January, and February to obtain the most current data on visitor expenditures and demographics. The survey has been designed and submitted to the Institute Review Board of the University of Northern Iowa. A copy has also been submitted to the President of the Iowa Gaming Association for Board approval. The survey will elicit information on visitor demographics and spending behavior. Information will be obtained for the following expenditure sectors: restaurants, lodging, grocery stores, souvenirs, gasoline, gambling, recreation, and entertainment. All the casinos will be required to distribute the survey to the visitors and mail the completed ones to UNI. A minimum of one hundred surveys are required from each casino. The research team at UNI will be responsible for data entry and analysis.

Iowa Gaming Association has also been requested to provide data on casino employee zip codes, total number of employees at their property and average salary including benefits. A list of contact names for the Study Area III convention and Visitor Bureaus/Chamber of Commerce has been obtained. These will be contacted to elicit information on general visitor statistics such as total number of visitors to the county for the most recent year and their travel and spending behavior.

The Principal Investigator, Professor Deepak Chhabra, participated in a training session hosted by the Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. on November 18 and 19 to assess the software that will be used to ascertain economic impacts of casino visitor expenditures. The purpose was to receive updated information on the most recent state and county level data that is going to be released in January, 2005. In addition, appropriate sector allocation of casino visitor expenditures, subsequent leakages (money leaving the study area IV) out of the host region, and retail purchases and their margining were discussed.

Substitute site visitations

A student was recruited from the College of HPELS to examine substitute site visitations for Study Areas II and III. Counties for Study Area II were identified. Study Area II comprises of approximately 81 counties (twelve casino counties and sixty-nine adjacent non-casino counties). Questions were designed to elicit information from Convention and Visitor Bureau and Chamber of Commerce personnel. A matrix for each county was created to display elicited information. Convention and Visitors Bureau/ Chamber of Commerce of 15 counties were contacted to identify the main substitute sites and their visitation patterns from 1988 to the most recent year.

Social impact

The social impact survey went through several phases prior to its inception. The questionnaire had to be finalized and programmed. Interviewers had to be recruited and trained. General public sample had to be drawn and human subjects approval had to be obtained from the Institution Review Board of UNI. During the last phase, data collection began. Each of the above mentioned phases is discussed below:

1. Finalize questionnaire. The initial draft questionnaire was rigorously examined for coverage of relevant subject matter, comprehension by general public adults, and ease of administration. This included reviews by experienced staff at CSBR (Center for Social Behavior Research) and mock interviews. Some questions were reworded to be more specific and clearly stated. Some were reordered to improve the flow for the respondents. The questionnaire went through eight drafts to reach the final version. Testing suggested the actual interview length would average approximately 14 minutes.

2. Program questionnaire for data collection. Interviewing at the CSBR lab uses CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) software that requires questionnaire programming. This programming displays the questions in the correct order on a screen for the interviewer to read and the responses are entered automatically into a data base from the keyboard. The sample of telephone numbers is distributed to the calling stations by the programming, however the numbers are manually dialed to avoid any annoying connect sounds or delays for the respondent. Call dispositioning occurs at the same time as the interviewing to track the history of call attempts and call outcomes for every number dialed. The staff Assistant Interviewer Supervisor and Information Technologist worked together to complete this programming and to test it. With only slight modifications, the programming was quickly put in place and ready to be used for actual data collection.

3. Hire and train interviewers. Position openings for new telephone interviewers were published in the on-campus, web-based job announcements. Interested persons were directed to acquire and return application materials from CSBR. The applications were reviewed and applicants interviewed by the CSBR Interviewer Supervisor. Five new interviewers were hired for the project. They, along with, 2 interviewers already on staff were trained on the weekend of November 13-14 for the gambling impacts study.

4. Draw general public sample. The sampling plan for the general public interviews called for devising 50 mile radius zones around each of Iowa's 17 casino sites. Those zones exclude any areas outside the state boundaries. Using GIS technology, these zones were constructed and the ZIP codes falling within these boundaries were identified. This information was provided to a reliable vendor (Survey Sampling, Inc. of Connecticut) of telephone samples. The vendor associated the ZIP codes with telephone exchanges and drew a sample of 900 residential telephone numbers for each of the 17 casino areas. The numbers were cleaned of known business numbers and sent to CSBR. The goal is to complete 100 interviews within each of these 17 areas.

5. Acquire human subject's research approval. An application, including a draft questionnaire, to the UNI Institution Review Board (Human Subjects Review Committee) was prepared by the Principal Investigator, Professor Deepak Chhabra and Prof. Lutz (Director, CSBR), and submitted on November 3, 2004. The Review Committee acted expeditiously and granted approval on November 11, 2004.

6. Begin data collection. As mentioned above in # 3, training of interviewers occurred on November 13-14. Actual data collection began on the evening of November 15, 2004 with a limited number of interviewers. No problems with the questionnaire, its programming, or the sample came to light within the first two days of effort, and so interviewing proceeded to full staffing. Through November 29, 2004, two hundred interviews had been completed.
